Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei

# Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis (Chapter)

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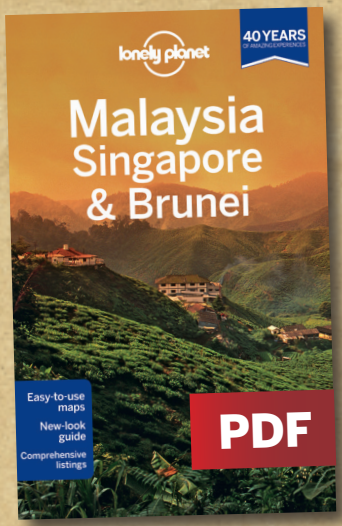


**Coverage includes:** Pulau Langkawi, Alor Setar & Around, Kangar and Taman Negara Perlis.

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# Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis

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## Why Go?

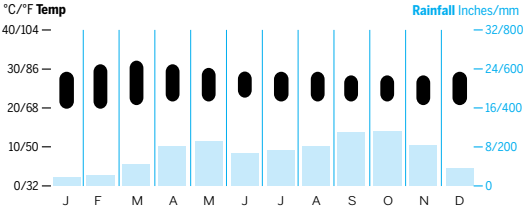
The Malays are known as *bumiputra* (sons of the soil). That soil, physical and cultural, is most fertile in Kedah and Perlis. Limestone pillars thrust up through this paddyscape, which makes for the harvest of over half of Malaysia's rice supply.

Not that many foreigners see this. While it may be one of the most touristed states in Malaysia, most travellers would draw a blank if you asked them anything about 'Kedah'. That's because almost everyone knows it by its biggest island and Malaysia's number-one holiday destination: Pulau Langkawi. And justifiably so; Langkawi's clear waters and wide beaches warrant the attention they receive, while corners of the island even seem to mimic the green, fecund terrain of the mainland.

Perlis, Malaysia's smallest state, has an even lower profile. It's also proximate to Thailand, and most travellers rush through here on their way to that kingdom. Their loss: this corner of the country is part of the Malay heartland, which makes it overwhelmingly friendly and culturally significant.

## When to Go

### Kuala Kedah




**Feb** Generally the region's driest month, although temperatures can be relatively high.

**Apr–Oct** The wettest time of year; the odd tropical storm is expected and tourist numbers are low.

**Jul** Typically Pulau Langkawi's coolest month.

# KEDAH

For travellers' purposes there are essentially two Kedahs: the tropical island of Pulau Langkawi and its attached islets; and rural, little-visited mainland Kedah. The paddy field is the eternal horizon of the latter, also known as Malaysia's 'rice bowl'. Two blocks of colour constantly kiss at the edge of your eyesight: robin's-egg blue on top and deep, alive green on the bottom, with strips of bitumen webbing through. If you find inspiration in the rustic, clean-lined aesthetic of Asian agriculture, this state is the field of sunflowers to your inner van Gogh.

The other Kedah is the stuff of tourist brochures that don't skimp on descriptions such as 'sun-kissed' or 'paradise'. The good news is that Langkawi's beaches generally live up to the hype, and you'll even

## Langkawi, Kedah & Perlis Highlights

1. Sliding through the seven pools of Langkawi's **Telaga Tujuh** (p193)
2. Riding the **Panorama Langkawi** (p187) cable car all 708m to the top of Gunung Machinchang to enjoy the spectacular views
3. Revelling in the former glory days of royal Malaysia in **Alor Setar** (p200)
4. Relaxing on one of the stunning beaches of **Pulau Langkawi** (p185)
5. Exploring the limestone cliffs and remote border feel of **Taman Negara Perlis** (p205)
6. Visiting one of the country's better provincial museums at the **Muzium Kota Kayang** (p204)
7. Getting into the groove of small-town Malaysia in tiny **Kangar** (p204)

find pockets of the mainland's unique green landscape, in addition to an island destination that continues to maintain its Malay roots. If, like most, you've only included Pulau Langkawi on your itinerary, you can rest assured in the fact that you'll get the chance to witness both Kedahs.

### History

Kedah is one of the most historically significant Malay states. Settlement goes back to the Stone Age, and some of the earliest excavated archaeological sites in the country are near Gunung Jerai. More recent finds in Lembah Bujang date back to the Hindu-Buddhist period in the 4th century AD, and the current royal family can trace its line directly to this time. Discoveries in Lembah Bujang show that it was the cradle of Hindu-Buddhist civilisation on the peninsula – the society that would become the foundation stone for Malay culture – and one of the first places to come into contact with Indian traders. The latter would eventually bring Islam to Malaysia, a religion whose cultural impact cannot be overstated here.

During the 7th and 8th centuries, Kedah paid tribute to the Srivijaya Empire of Sumatra, but later fell under the influence of the Siamese until the 15th century, when the rise of Melaka led to the Islamisation of the area. In the 17th century Kedah was attacked by the Portuguese, who had already conquered Melaka, and by the Acehnese, who saw Kedah as a threat to their own spice production.

In the hope that the British would help protect what remained of Kedah from Siam, the sultan handed over Penang to the British in the late 18th century. Nevertheless, in the early 19th century Kedah once again came under Siamese control, where it remained, either directly or as a vassal, until early in the 20th century when Siam passed control to the British. This history of changing hands between the Thai and the British manifests, in places, as a somewhat hybrid Malay-Thai culture.

After WWII, during which Kedah (along with Kelantan) was the first part of Malaya to be invaded by the Japanese, Kedah became part of the Federation of Malaya in 1948, albeit reluctantly.

During the 2008 elections, Kedah, which is traditionally a breeding ground for leaders of the Barisan National ruling party, came out strongly in favour of the opposition, particularly the Islamist Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS).

## Pulau Langkawi

POP 64,792

Langkawi is synonymous with 'tropical paradise' – and with good reason. Since 2008 the archipelago's official title has been *Langkawi Permata Kedah* (Langkawi, the Jewel of Kedah), no doubt inspired by the island's clear waters, relatively pristine beaches and intact jungle. The district's been duty free since 1986 and roping in tourists well before that. Yet despite their immense drawing power, these 99 islands, dominated by 478.5-sq-km Pulau Langkawi, have not been overdeveloped beyond recognition. Get just a little way off the main beaches and this is idyllic rural Malaysia, all *kampungs* (villages) and oil lamps. It's the kind of tropical island where there's no lack of spas, seafood restaurants and beach bars, but where the locals continue to go about their ways just as they have for generations.

### Sights & Activities

#### KUAH & AROUND

Kuah is Langkawi's main town, and the only reason to stop here is for banks, ferries or duty-free shopping.

**FREE Lagenda Langkawi Dalam Taman** THEME PARK

(Map p186; Jln Persiaran Putra; ⏲8am-7pm) A landscaped 'folklore theme park' that stretches along the waterfront. Bright statues dotted amid the lakes illustrate several Langkawi legends – with signboards in English – and there's a narrow, mediocre strip of beach. It's a popular spot for joggers.

**Langkawi Bird Paradise** ZOO

(Map p186; 1485 Jln Kisap, off Jln Air Hangat; admission adult/child RM28/18; ⏲8.30am-6pm) Langkawi Bird Paradise touts itself as Asia's first fully covered wildlife park. While there are plenty of animals around (with an emphasis on exotic birds), the fact that feeding is encouraged, coupled with the relatively poor state of the animals' environments, compels us to include this listing more as a discouragement than a recommendation. Langkawi Bird Paradise is located about 3km north of Kuah.

#### PANTAI CENANG

**Underwater World** AQUARIUM

(Map p190; www.underwaterworldlangkawi.com.my; Pantai Cenang; admission adult/child RM38/28; ⏲10am-6pm) Malaysia's largest aquarium,

## Pulau Langkawi

featuring 200 different species of marine and freshwater creatures. Some exhibits (especially the rainforest walk) are well executed; some feel like a tropical aquarium in need of a cleaning, but in general it's a great place for the kids.

### FREE Laman Padi

MUSEUM

(Rice Garden; Map p190; ⏲10am-6pm) Kids will love this somewhat abandoned-feeling 'eco-tourism' complex comprising rice paddies populated by water buffaloes and ducks. If you can locate the staff (we couldn't), you

can learn about or even have a hand in planting rice. There's also a basic museum dedicated to rice cultivation, a restaurant and **Nawa Sari Spa** (Map p190; ☎955 4168; Laman Padi; ⏲10am-8pm), where you can contently watch rice paddies sway under the breeze while you're pummelled and oiled by Thai masseurs (massages RM45 to RM100).

### Nithi Ayurvedic Massage — SPA

(Map p190; ☎955 9078; www.langkawi-ayurvedic-massage.com; Pantai Cenang; ⏲10am-7pm) Customers rave about treatments like *shiro dhara*, where a continual flow of warm herbal oil is poured over your forehead as your head and shoulders are massaged. Treatments run from RM65 to RM195.

## PANTAI TENGAH

The place to go for a massage or pedicure, the main strip along Pantai Tengah is home to the bulk of the island's spas. Massage treatments average about RM150 per hour, while facials and other treatments start at about RM60. Many of the below also offer complimentary transfer; call for details.

### Alun-Alun Spa — SPA

(Map p190; ☎955 5570; www.alunalunspa.com; ⏲11am-11pm) With three branches across the island, Alun-Alun is accessible and gets good reviews. The spa's natural/organic products are also available for purchase.

### Ishan Spa — SPA

(Map p190; ☎955 5585; www.ishanspa.com; ⏲10am-8pm) The six spa suites here offer some pretty posh pampering – air treatments, body scrubs and the like – in a space that screams traditional.

### Ayer Spa — SPA

(Map p190; ☎955 6776; www.ayerspa.com.my; ⏲10am-11pm) Affordable Malay-style massage treatments in a cosy wood structure.

### Sun Spa — SPA

(Map p190; ☎955 9287; ⏲1-10pm) Offers an interesting repertoire of affordable packages.

## PANTAI KOK & AROUND

### Oriental Village — AMUSEMENT PARK

(Map p186; www.orientalvillage.my; Pantai Kok; ⏲most outlets 10am-7pm) Even if you're not into shopping, this Disneyland-like open-air mall is home to one of the island's most worthwhile attractions. **Panorama Langkawi** (Map p186; www.panoramalangkawi.com; ⏲10am-8pm Mon-Tue, noon-8pm Wed, 10am-8pm Thu, 9.30am-8pm Fri-Sun) is a cable car that takes visitors on a vertiginous 20-minute trip to the top of the majestic Gunung Machinchang (708m). There are some incredible views along the way, and at the top, you can walk across the SkyBridge,

## Pulau Langkawi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1 Durian Perangin ..... D2
2 Galeria Perdana ..... D2
3 Gunung Raya ..... D3
4 Kompleks Kraf Langkawi ..... C2
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28 Night Market (Kuah) ..... E3
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30 Night Market (Padang Matsirat) ..... C3
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31 Siti Fatimah ..... C3
32 Wonderland Food Store ..... D3

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Charlie's Place ..... (see 13)

**Shopping**
Atma Alam Batik Art Vilage ..... (see 25)




a single-span suspension bridge located 100m above old-growth jungle canopy. Other attractions at Oriental Village include the overpriced **Langkawi Elephant Adventures** (Map p186; www.gajah.org; elephant rides for 2 adults & 1 child 5min RM80, 15min RM200; ⏲10.30am-1pm & 2-5.45pm); **Tiger! Tiger!** (Map p186; admission free; ⏲10am-7pm), a tiger exhibit and gallery; and a handful of restaurants and souvenir shops.

### TELUK DATAI & AROUND

**Temurun Waterfall** WATERFALL

(Map p186) A brief walk from the main road, the falls here – the island's tallest – are worth a look; the turn-off is just east of a huge concrete archway spanning the road.

**Langkawi Crocodile Farm** FARM

(Map p186; admission adult/child RM20/15; ⏲9am-6pm) If you're not a kid or sympathetic to reptiles you may enjoy the twice-daily 'stunt' shows and hourly feedings, but the small, dirty pools and the fact that many of the farm's residents are turned into meat is a turn-off for many.

### TANJUNG RHU & AROUND

The pier near Tanjung Rhu is the main jumping-off point for the much-touted **boat trips** into the extensive mangrove forests that edge much of the northeastern coast of Langkawi. Options include stops at caves, fish farms and eagle watching. Tours are conducted from 9am to 5pm, and boats, which can accommodate up to eight passengers, start at RM250 for an hour-long excursion.

**Durian Perangin** WATERFALL

(Map p186) The waterfalls are located 3km off the 113 road, just south of Tanjung Rhu. The swimming pools, 10 minutes' walk up through the forest, are always refreshingly cool, although the falls are best seen at the end of monsoon season, from late September and early October. In the dry season, naturally, they are not so spectacular.

**Air Hangat** HOT SPRINGS

(Map p186; ⏲8am-6pm) This village, located south of Tanjung Rhu, is known for its hot springs. Soak your feet for free or bathe in a private room for RM70 per hour. Massage is also available for RM80 per hour. The

modern complex also holds occasional 'cultural shows' – contact Langkawi's tourist office to see if anything is lined up. As with so many places on Langkawi, the springs are associated with an intriguing legend.

**Pantai Pasir Hitam** BEACH

(Map p186) West of Tanjung Rhu and firmly on the tour-bus route is Langkawi's much touted but ultimately disappointing 'black-sand beach'. It isn't technically a black-sand beach, but mineral oxides have added their colour scheme to the coast. There's a small tourist market and, as a disturbing backdrop, the Kedah cement plant, which stands out like a post-apocalyptic, smoke-belching thumb amid the green.

### ELSEWHERE ON THE ISLAND

**Gunung Raya** MOUNTAIN

(Map p186) The tallest mountain on the island (881m) can be reached by a snaking, paved road through the jungle. It's a spectacular drive to the top with views across the island and over to Thailand from a lookout point and a small teahouse (assuming there's no fog). Access to the mountain may occasionally be restricted by the government; the gate at the foot of the mountain will be lowered.

**Kota Mahsuri** SHRINE

(Mahsuri's Fort; Map p186; admission adult/child RM15/5; ⏲8am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 6.30pm Fri-Sun) Back around 1819 (the date is debated), the Malay princess Mahsuri was unjustly accused of adultery and executed by stabbing. With her dying breath she cursed Langkawi with seven generations of bad luck and expired, supposedly bleeding white blood, a sign of her innocence. Not long after, the Siamese invaded the island, and some 160 years later, in 1987 (that's about seven generations), Langkawi took off as a tourism destination. That's the story anyways, and its been commemorated by this historical complex that includes Mahsuri's Shrine as well as a re-creation of a traditional house, a

## A CHEAT SHEET TO LANGKAWI'S BEACHES

Langkawi is big, folks, almost 500 sq km. Kuah, in the southeast corner of the island, is the main town and the arrival point for ferries, but the beaches are elsewhere.

The busiest and most developed beach is the 2km-long strip of sand at **Pantai Cenang**. The beach is gorgeous: white sand, teal water, green palms and all that good stuff. There are watersports activities at hand, and the water is good for swimming, but jellyfish are common, so you might feel a bit tingly when you go for a dip. A sandbar sometimes appears at low tide, allowing you to inspect local sea life. Between November and January you can walk across this sandbar to the nearby island of **Pulau Rebak Kecil**, but only for two hours around low tide. The island of **Pulau Tepor** can be reached by hired boat from Pantai Cenang. There are some very fine top-end resorts at Cenang, as well as the bulk of Langkawi's budget and midrange accommodation. Come night time, an odd mix of expats, domestic tourists, backpackers and package holidaymakers take to the main road to eat, drink, window shop and generally make merry.

Head south and Langkawi gets a little more polished; as the road loops around a rocky headland, you're in upscale **Pantai Tengah**. It's a slightly smaller, narrower beach, with less noisy watersports activity than on Pantai Cenang. There are a few big, all-inclusive resorts here, good restaurants and bars, and a few cheaper chalet clusters.

On the western part of the island, 12km north of Pantai Cenang, **Pantai Kok** fronts a beautiful bay surrounded by limestone mountains and jungle. Unfortunately an outdoor shopping centre and the nearby harbour have left it feeling somewhat overdeveloped. There are a handful of equidistantly located upscale resorts around here, many with their own small strips of beach.

On the far northwestern corner of the island, the beaches at **Teluk Datai** are arguably some of the island's most beautiful and secluded, but are really only accessible if you're staying in one of the area's two luxury resorts.

Also on the north coast, **Tanjung Rhu** is one of Langkawi's wider and better beaches, fronted by magnificent limestone stacks that bend the ocean into a pleasant bay. On clear days, the sunsets here give 'stunning' new meaning. The water is shallow, and at low tide you can walk across the sandbank to the neighbouring islands, except during the monsoon season. Accommodation is provided by two upscale resorts.

theatre, a 'diorama museum' and some simple food outlets.

A legacy of Mahsuri's curse can still sometimes be seen in the 'field of burnt rice' at nearby Padang Matsirat. There, villagers once burnt their rice fields rather than allow them to fall into the hands of Siamese invaders. It's said heavy rain still sometimes brings traces of burnt grains to the surface.

These sites are west of Kuah, a few kilometres off the road leading to the west-coast beaches and the airport.

**Galeria Perdana** MUSEUM
(Map p186; Mukim Air Hangat; admission RM10; ⏲8.30am-5.30pm) Established by former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, this museum displays the sort of weird gifts that get passed between foreign nations and heads of state (F-1 racers, Ming vases painted with Mahathir's face – that sort of thing). Galeria Perdana is located about 8km north of Kuah.

## Activities & Tours

The tours below can be booked at any of the numerous travel agents in Kuah and along Pantai Cenang, and at most upmarket resorts that organise tours. During the monsoon season from July to mid-September, the seas are often too rough and unpredictable for many of the boat trips.

### Cruises

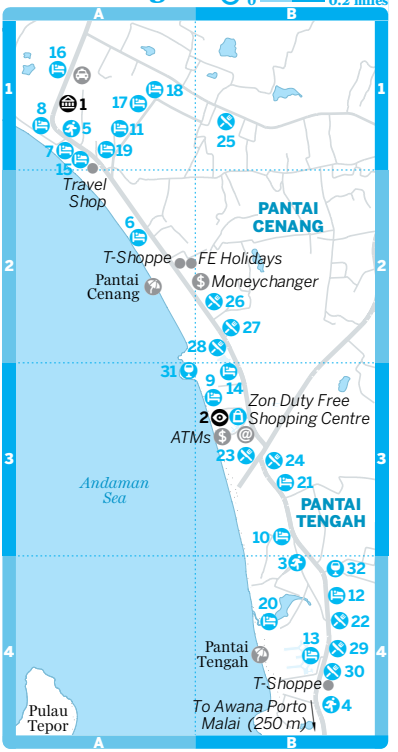
There are several cruise operators in Langkawi, nearly all of whom offer daily dinner, sunset and cocktail cruises. Boats depart from various piers across the island and bookings can be made by phone or online, or via travel agents.

**Blue Water** CRUISE
(☎013-407 3166; www.bluewaterstarsailing.com) This outfit runs an infamously boozy dinner cruise every day from 2pm to 8pm (RM450). Boats depart from pier at Kuah; transport is not included.

**Crystal Yacht Holidays** CRUISE
(☎955 6545; www.crystalyacht.com; Pantai Cenang) Operates popular sunset dinner cruises (RM250). Boats depart from the pier near the Awana Porto Malai, south of Pantai Tengah, and transport from most hotels is included.

**Tropical Charters** CRUISE
(☎012-588 3274; www.tropicalcharters.com.my; Pantai Tengah) Offers a variety of cruises, starting from RM220. Boats depart from the pier near the Awana Porto Malai, south of Pantai Tengah, and transport from most hotels is included.

**Pantai Cenang & Pantai Tengah**




### Diving & Snorkelling

Strung out like several green jewels in the teal is the **Pulau Payar Marine Park**, the focus of Langkawi's dive and snorkelling expeditions. Most trips come to 2km-long Pulau Payar, but you probably won't see the interior of the island – all the action centres on a diving platform and horseshoe-bend of coast. Inquire about the water conditions beforehand, as it can be murky. But when it's clear you don't even have to snorkel to be treated to some wonderful views of tropical fish. Recommended diving outfits include:

**East Marine** DIVING & SNORKELLING
(Map p186; ☎966 3966; www.eastmarine.com.my; Jln Pantai Dato Syed Omar, Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, Kuah; snorkelling/diving trips from RM230/250;

## Pantai Cenang & Pantai Tengah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11 Gecko Guesthouse ... A1
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13 Holiday Villa ... B4
14 Langkapuri Inn ... B3
15 Malibest Resort ... A1
16 Meritus Pelangi Beach Resort & Spa ... A1
17 Palms Guest House ... A1
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8am-6pm) Probably the most reputable diving outfit on the island. East Marine conduct full-day diving and snorkeling excursions to Pulau Payar, as well as PADI certification courses starting at RM1300.

**Langkawi Coral** DIVING & SNORKELLING
(Map p186; 899 8822; www.langkawicoral.com; 64 Jln Tanjung Tokong, Kuah; snorkelling/diving from RM300/455) Diving and snorkelling trips to Pulau Payar include a buffet lunch along with some time for sunbathing and fish-feeding. Langkawi Coral operate a stall at Kuah's ferry pier, open approximately 7am to 9pm.

**Coral Island** DIVING & SNORKELLING
(www.coralisland.com.my; snorkelling/diving from RM120/200) Diving and snorkelling excursions to Pulau Payar. Booking is done online or by phone, and Coral Island offer transport from most parts of the island to the jumping-off point at Kuah.

### Helicopter

**Helitours Langkawi** SCENIC FLIGHTS
(Map p190; 012-484 2270; Pantai Tengah; tours RM550-3750) This outfit offers helicopter tours of the area ranging in time from five to 45 minutes. The R44 helicopter can accommodate three guests.

### Island Hopping

The most popular day trip is the island-hopping tour, offered by most tour and diving companies, and costing as little as RM25 per person; the operator **Coral Island** (www.coralisland.com.my) gets good reviews. Tours usually take in Dayang Bunting (Lake of the Pregnant Maiden), located on the island of the same name. It's a freshwater lake surrounded by craggy limestone cliffs and dense jungle, and it's good for swimming. Other destinations include Pulau Beras Basah, sea stacks, sea caves and a cruise around mangroves for a look at the local eagles. Pulau Singa Besar might also be visited, with its resident population of mouse deer and crotchety monkeys.

## LEGENDARY LANGKAWI

The name Langkawi combines the old Malay words *helang* (eagle) and *kawi* (strong). Classical Malay literature claims the island as one of the resting places of Garuda, the mythological bird that became Vishnu's vehicle. The whole island is steeped in legends, and the favourite story is of Mahsuri, a maiden who was wrongly accused of infidelity. Before finally allowing herself to be executed, she put a curse on the island for seven generations. As proof of her innocence, white blood flowed from her veins, turning the sands of Langkawi's beaches white. Her mausoleum is known today as Kota Mahsuri.

Another legend concerns the naming of places around the island. Pulau Langkawi's two most powerful families became involved in a bitter argument over a marriage proposal. A fight broke out and all the kitchen utensils were used as missiles. The *kuah* (gravy) was spilt at Kuah and seeped into the ground at Kisap, which means 'to seep'. A pot landed at Belanga Perak (Broken Pot) and finally the saucepan of *air panas* (hot water) came to land where Air Hangat village is today. The fathers of these two families got their comeuppance for causing all this mayhem – they are now the island's two major mountain peaks. You can learn more at the intriguing Lagenda Langkawi Dalam Taman in Kuah.

### Nature & Adventure Tours

**Dev's Adventure Tours** GUIDED TOUR
(☎494 9193; www.langkawi-nature.com; Pantai Cenang; tours RM100-220) Cycling, birdwatching, mangrove excursions, jungle walks, culture tours... This outfit offers a fat menu of options, and its guides and service get rave reviews. Booking is done online or by phone, and transport is provided from most hotels.

**Langkawi Canopy Adventures** GUIDED TOUR
(☎012-466 8027; www.langkawi.travel; tours RM180-220) The main highlight here is 'air-trekking' through the rainforest canopy, with excursions divided into two levels of difficulty. Booking can be done by phone or online, and needs to be done at least a day in advance. You'll need to arrange a taxi to take you to the site – a 30-minute ride from most parts of the island – at Lubuk Semilang, in the middle of Pulau Langkawi.

## Festivals & Events

### April

**Langkawi International Water Festival** WATER SPORTS
Sandcastle-building, kayak racing, underwater treasure hunting and fishing are just some of the events held at this annual festival. Most competitions are held at Pantai Kok and Pantai Cenang.

**Langkawi International Festival of Arts (LIFA)** ARTS
Held every other year, this is a 10-day festival celebrating local and international art; the next one will take place in 2014.

### October/November

**Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition** AIR SHOW
(www.lima.com.my) LIMA is considered one of the world's major air shows.

## Sleeping

Despite the apparent variety, and perhaps due to the island's general isolation, accommodation on Langkawi doesn't have the same high standard as other beachy places in Southeast Asia. Sure, there are some amazing luxury resorts, but midrange places (and even many of the upscale ones) can feel lacklustre, and there are relatively few budget-oriented hostels and dorms.

During school holidays and the peak tourist season (approximately November to February), Pulau Langkawi can become crowded and advance bookings are generally necessary. At other times of the year supply far outstrips demand.

See our cheat sheet to the island's beaches to determine where to stay.

### KUAH

There's really no reason to stay in Kuah unless you *seriously* have a thing for duty-free shopping. But if you've somehow managed to get stranded at the jetty, consider the following:

**Bayview Hotel** HOTEL **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎966 1818; www.bayviewhotels.com; 1 Jln Pandak Mayah; incl breakfast r/ste RM375-635/715-835; ❄@📶🏊) This is your standard high-rise chain hotel. The rooms were slightly musty when we visited, but this was made

up for by great views from the higher floors. If you stay here, please let us know what goes on in the hotel's Woodpecker Lounge.

**Eagle Bay Hotel** HOTEL $$
(Map p186; ☎966 8585; www.eaglebay.com.my; 33 Jln Persiaran Putra; r/ste RM270-390/440-500; ❄📶🏊) This hotel's eagle-themed exterior is a short walk from the jetty. Promotional rates are typically half of those listed here, making it one of the few budget/midrange places in Kuah.

### PANTAI CENANG & AROUND

**TOP CHOICE Bon Ton & Temple Tree** BOUTIQUE HOTEL $$$
(Map p186; ☎955 1688; ❄@📶🏊) These two quasilinked boutique hotels are our favourite places on Langkawi, if not in the region. **Bon Ton** (www.bontonresort.com.my; villas incl breakfast RM650-1270) takes the form of eight Malay stilt-houses perched over a grassy, coconut palm-studded plot of land, each one decked out with dark wood and positioned to catch the breeze. With its organic accents and traditional craftwork, it's somehow regal and rustic all at once. Next door, **Temple Tree** (www.templetree.com; r/villas incl breakfast RM670-1370) ups the stakes with a collection of antique structures relocated from various points in Malaysia. An imposing Chinese mansion, a wooden villa from Penang, colonial-style shophouses and other restored structures make up the stately, park-like compound. Linking both locations is a common thread of class, style, thoughtful service and – take this as a warning if you don't care to share your villa with Felix – cats.

**Beach Garden Resort** HOTEL $$
(Map p190; ☎955 1363; www.beachgardenresort.com; r RM230-320; ❄📶🏊) An unabashedly old-school, yet clean 'n cheery, resort-style place right on a relatively quiet patch of Pantai Cenang. All 12 rooms are decked out with the same aged furniture, and share access to a tiny pool and the resort's rustically inviting restaurant.

**Rebak Marina Resort** RESORT $$$
(Map p186; ☎966 5566; www.rebakmarina.com; incl breakfast r/ste RM1100-1450/1750-2050; ❄@📶🏊) Lying just off Pantai Cenang, the small island of Rebak Besar plays host to this exclusive resort, which offers spacious and elegant chalets in beautifully landscaped grounds. It has all the facilities you would expect, including a gym, spa, tennis courts and restaurants. Transfers from Langkawi airport are included in the price, and package deals strip a significant amount off the rates shown here.

**Casa del Mar** BOUTIQUE HOTEL $$$
(Map p190; ☎955 2388; www.casadelmar-langkawi.com; ste incl breakfast RM1200-2100; ❄@📶🏊) This is a sumptuous, vaguely Spanish-themed place on the quieter northern end of Pantai Cenang. Rooms are decked out with thoughtful design touches and techie amenities, as well as a small private garden or balcony. Various package deals are available, and rates can vary dramatically according to occupancy.

**Malibest Resort** HOTEL $$
(Map p190; ☎955 8222; www.malibestresort.com; r RM120-250; ❄📶) Malibest is a friendly, social-feeling place with rooms right on the busiest

## SLIPPIN' & SLIDIN'

If you've been splashing around the ocean, why not add some variety to your life and lounge in some freshwater rock pools? **Telaga Tujuh** (Seven Wells), located at the top of a waterfall inland from Pantai Kok, is a series of small pools connected by a thin trickle of refreshingly cool mountain water. The pools are surrounded by thick jungle that is home to a family of cheeky (and somewhat intimidating – keep any food out of sight) monkeys, and also offer brilliant views of the island. The smooth rut between the pools is slick enough to slide down, especially towards the bottom, but it's worth nothing that over the years, a few people have managed to slip past the partially gated edge of the falls, resulting in serious injury and even death.

You can get here by rented car, motorbike or taxi; follow the main road 1km past Pantai Kok, then turn right at the t-intersection, continuing until the road dead-ends at a car park. From here it's a steady 10-minute climb through the rainforest (stay to the right) to the wells at the top of the falls. You can make a 2.5km hike from here to the cable-car station in Oriental Village; this is a taxing route that requires sound shoes and a good level of physical fitness.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

## NARELLE MCMURTRIE: HOTELIER

Narelle has lived on Pulau Langkawi for 18 years and is the owner of Bon Ton & Temple Tree (p193).

**How is Langkawi different from other beachy places in Southeast Asia?** Langkawi has very few hotels. In the last eight years only one five-star hotel has opened. So development is slow and this is the pace of life. Tourists get to see a real island with people totally unaffected by tourism.

**What's your favourite beach?** One of the deserted beaches at Dayan Bunting island: beautiful little cove, clear water and a private beach.

**Can you recommend a good place to eat?** My favourite lunch place is Siti Fatimah. Normally 70 dishes are on offer, buffet style, for approximately RM7 with a drink. They are not after the tourist dollar and serve from the heart – very genuine people.

**And a good bar?** La Sal for sunset cocktails, surf and sand.

**One must-do Langkawi activity?** Hire a car to explore the island.

**What's one interesting peek into local life?** If you happen to be here for fasting month (Ramadan), you get to sample amazing home cooking from all the little stalls that appear from nowhere.

**When's the best time to visit Langkawi?** For the tan it's December, January and February; otherwise March when there is no rain.

stretch of Pantai Cenang. These range from relatively modern brick duplex bungalows to the undisputed king of the crop: 'treetop' chalets that sit atop tall wooden pylons and enjoy uninterrupted sea views.

### Cabin Resort
HOTEL $$

(Map p190; ☎012-417 8499; www.thecabin.com.my; r RM150; ❄📶) With a vibe verging on caravan park, the Cabin features 10 cutesy duplex bungalows a short walk from the beach. Rooms are pleasantly cosy (read: small) but, decked out with colourful IKEA furniture, have more character than most places in this price range.

### Meritus Pelangi Beach Resort & Spa
RESORT $$$

(Map p190; ☎952 8888; www.meritushotels.com; r/ste from RM1030; ❄@📶🏊) An expansive, family-oriented resort with a full roster of facilities, kids' activities, restaurants and a seemingly never-ending swimming pool. The rooms generally have a dark, slightly conservative feel, but this may change with the ongoing renovations.

### Delta Motel
HOTEL $

(Map p190; ☎955 1307; www.facebook.com/deltamotel; r RM60-140, bungalows RM70-100; ❄📶) Tall trees and A-frame bungalows give this beachfront place a distinct campground vibe. The interiors of the A-frames don't live up to their recently renovated exteriors; you're better off staying in one of the newer rooms.

### Langkapuri Inn
HOTEL $$

(Map p190; ☎955 1202; r incl breakfast RM140-220; ❄📶) A pleasant clutch of connected chalets at the southern end of the beach. The pricier ones have sea views and a pinch of character; the cheapest are in need of a renovation and should be avoided.

### AB Motel
HOTEL $$

(Map p190; ☎955 1300; r RM60-150; ❄) As the dull name essentially implies, this is a relatively basic complex of scrubbed-down rooms that gets good reviews from travellers for its cleanliness and extremely easy beach access.

## PANTAI TENGAH & AROUND

### TOP CHOICE Ambong Ambong
HOTEL $$$

(Map p190; ☎955 8428; www.ambong-among.com; ste incl breakfast RM685-1195; ❄📶🏊) This clutch of minimalist, contemporary structures on a jungly hillside results in a noteworthy and pleasing contrast. Choose between one of four inviting studio suites or one of the vast-feeling two-bedroom cottages; all are stylish and airy, have balconies overlooking the greenery, and a stay includes a complimentary massage. One of Langkawi's more sophisticated places to stay.

### Villa Molek
HOTEL, APARTMENT $$$

(Map p190; ☎955 2995; www.villamolek.com; ste incl breakfast RM635; ❄📶🏊) Those looking for a quiet, homelike stay should head here. Accommodation takes the form of

12 apartment-style suites, each with living room and kitchenette. Rooms are situated in a small, secluded garden across the road from the beach and, as under 18s aren't welcome, draw a largely mature clientele.

**Frangipani** RESORT $$$
(Map p190; ☎952 0000; www.frangipanilangkawi.com; incl breakfast r/ste RM700-1200/1500-1800; ❄@📶🏊) Friendly service, genuine efforts towards ecologic conservation and a location right on a quiet stretch of beach are the reasons to stay at this vast resort, less so the slightly cramped rooms.

**Zackry Guest House** GUESTHOUSE $
(Map p190; www.zackryguesthouse.langkawinetworks.com; r RM35-90; ❄@📶) This messy, friendly, rambling, family-run guesthouse is the kind of place where you're likely to fall in with a local crowd. Rooms are basic, yet clean and cosy, and there are lots of ramshackle communal areas. Note that there's a two-night minimum, no phone bookings and only about half of the rooms have an attached bathroom.

**Tropical Resort** HOTEL $$
(Map p190; ☎955 4075; www.tropicalresortlangkawi.com; r incl breakfast RM120-150; ❄@📶) Located in this quiet spot at the back of the beach, just a few minutes' walk from the seashore, is this string of spotless and well-run chalets. A renovation at research time was injecting a bit of style in to the rooms, and there was talk of installing a swimming pool.

**Green Village** HOTEL $$
(Map p190; ☎955 3117; www.greenvillagelangkawi.com; r incl breakfast RM140-230; ❄@📶🏊) Green Village takes the form of several linked, low-rise villas surrounding a pool and gardens. Rooms are small and rather plain, but bikes, a treehouse and a pool table make this the clever choice for a family on a budget.

**Holiday Villa** RESORT $$$
(Map p190; ☎952 9999; www.holidayvillahotellangkawi.com; incl breakfast r/ste RM460-520/1000-3600; ❄@📶🏊) A vast resort complex retaining a palpable '80s feel, not to mention tennis courts, a gym, several restaurants and an indoor pool 'exclusively for ladies'. Rooms are airy and brightly furnished, and look out over the lawns and the soft white-sand beach.

**Awana Porto Malai** RESORT $$$
(☎955 5111; www.awana.com.my; incl breakfast r/ste RM358-531/849-4800; ❄@📶🏊) A grand yet isolated-feeling resort just south of Pantai Tengah. Rooms are clean, if a little dated, and many look over an attractive harbour. The only beach is on an island just opposite the resort, a short boat ride away.

### PANTAI KOK & AROUND

**TOP CHOICE Tanjung Sanctuary** RESORT $$$
(Map p186; ☎952 0222; www.tanjungsanctuary.com.my; ste incl breakfast RM1000-1300; ❄@📶🏊) Wind through thick jungle to emerge at a rocky headland and this subtle, classy resort.

## BUDGET ACCOMMODATION

Pantai Cenang is home to the bulk of Langkawi's budget accommodation.

**Sweet Inn** (Map p190; ☎955 8864; r incl breakfast RM80-100; ❄📶) Super Sweet, actually: a cute orange building dotted with umbrella-shaded tables, plain rooms that manage to keep cool in the heat and a friendly common area where meeting fellow congregants at the temple of backpacking is easy and breezy.

**Palms Guest House** (Map p190; ☎017-631 0121; r RM55-75; ❄📶) Rooms here are basic and clean, and centred around a gravel-strewn courtyard shaded by (have a guess) palms. It's a good-value option, although we found service fluctuated between scarce and nonexistent.

**Gecko Guesthouse** (Map p190; ☎019-428 3801; rebeccafiott@hotmail.com; dm/r RM15/35-60; ❄📶) Here you'll find a jungly collection of bungalows, chalets and dorms, and lotsa dreadlocked folk in the common area and very good chocolate milkshakes behind the bar.

**Rainbow Lodge** (Map p190; ☎955 8103; www.rainbowlangkawi.com; dm/r RM18/50-150; ❄@📶) Set a little way back from the beach, this is a suitable option for those needing a cheap place to rest in between eating, drinking, hangover, and more drinking.

The 16 duplex villas are spacious and well appointed, but we liked the resort's remote, almost wild location, and the generous real estate between villas. Recommended.

**Danna** LUXURY HOTEL **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎959 3288; www.thedanna.com; incl breakfast r/ste RM1400-1700/3000-20,000; ❄@📶🏊) The imposing, colonial-themed Danna seems intent on setting a new standard for luxury on Langkawi. Rooms are huge and come decked out with attractive furniture and marble floors, and the hotel boasts its own man-made private island and Langkawi's biggest hotel pool. The Danna has several dining outlets of its own, but also has the benefit of being next door to the dining and nightlife options at Telaga Harbour Park.

**Berjaya Langkawi** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎959 1888; www.berjayahotel.com; incl breakfast r/ste RM820-1510/1770-2610; ❄@📶🏊) Past the headland at the northwestern end of the beach, the Berjaya seems to take up the entire northwest coast of the island. There's some 350 rooms spread over a vast area; guests are ferried between reception and their chalets in minibuses. The waterfront suites are the most attractive, while others look out onto the lush rainforest; a stay includes a complimentary tour of the latter.

**Sheraton Langkawi Beach Resort** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎952 8000; www.sheraton.com/langkawi; incl breakfast r/ste RM1380-1500/1700-6700; ❄@📶🏊) To the southeast of the other resorts, the Sheraton Langkawi has all the usual five-star amenities in an attractively secluded setting on a forested headland by the sea. Yet despite an ongoing renovation, many of the rooms tend to feel somewhat dark and past their prime.

### TELUK DATAI

**Datai Langkawi** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎959 2500; www.thedatai.com.my; incl breakfast r/ste RM2300-3200/3300-22,000; ❄@📶🏊) Tucked into a jungly corner in the far northwest of the island, the Datai manages to feel both untamed and luxurious. Choose between the spacious and modern rainforest or seafront villas, all of which have access to a small city's worth of amenities (spas, gyms, yoga – the works), not to mention one of the island's best beaches. A unique luxury experience.

**Andaman Langkawi** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎959 1088; www.luxurycollection.com/andaman; incl breakfast r/ste RM1200-1900/2300-3000; ❄@📶🏊) In a grand wooden Malay-style building seemingly dropped in the middle of the jungle is this luxurious retreat with the usual multistar amenities and dining outlets, as well as its own stunning semi-private beach. There are no villas or bungalows, but the rooms are large and inviting, many with great views.

### TANJUNG RHU

**TOP CHOICE Tanjung Rhu Resort** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎959 1033; www.tanjungrhu.com.my; incl breakfast r/ste RM1400-1600/1800-2800; ❄@📶🏊) This beautifully situated resort has large and comfy rooms with balconies and great views of the limestone and green water at Tanjung Rhu. Service is a pleasant blend of competent and friendly, and the resort has a family-friendly vibe. The only real downside is its distance from virtually all of Langkawi's attractions, restaurants and nightlife.

**Four Seasons Resort** RESORT **$$$**
(Map p186; ☎950 8888; www.fourseasons.com/langkawi; incl breakfast r/ste RM2000-2700/5900-21,800; ❄@📶🏊) Sporting a youthful (at least for a Four Seasons resort) vibe and a vaguely Moroccan theme, this is among Langkawi's most unique and luxurious resorts. Amenities are everything you'd expect at this level and service is impeccable. Bathrooms-so-big-you'll-get-lost-in-them aside, we loved the manicured jungle setting and the semi-private beach.

## Eating

### AROUND KUAH

**Wonderland Food Store** CHINESE **$$**
(Map p186; Lot 179-181, Pusat Perniagaan Kelana Mas, Kuah; mains from RM10; ⏲dinner) Of the string of Chinese-style seafood restaurants just outside Kuah, Wonderland has been around longer than most and gets the best reviews. It's an informal, open-air place where the food is both cheap and tasty.

### PANTAI CENANG & AROUND

**Nam** INTERNATIONAL **$$**
(Map p186; ☎955 3643; mains RM30-74; ⏲11am-11pm; ✎) At Bon Ton Resort, Nam boasts a well-executed menu of fusion goodness, from chargrilled rack of lamb with roast pumpkin, mint salad hummus and tomato jam, to a nine-course sampler of Straits

## LANGKAWI'S ROVING NIGHT MARKET

Local food can be a bit hard to find on Langkawi. Fortunately, for fans of Malay eats there's a rotating *pasar malam* (night market) held at various points across the island. It's a great chance to indulge in cheap, take-home meals and snacks, and is held from about 6pm to 10pm at the following locations:

**Monday** **Jalan Makam Mahsuri Lama** (Map p186), in the centre of the island, not far from the MARDI Agro Technology Park

**Tuesday** **Kedawang** (Map p186), just east of the airport

**Wednesday & Saturday** **Kuah** (Map p186), opposite the Masjid Al-Hana; this is the largest market

**Thursday** **Bohor Tempoyak** (Map p190), at the northern end of Pantai Cenang

**Friday** **Padang Lalang** (Map p186), at the roundabout near Pantai Pasir Hitam

**Sunday** **Padang Matsirat** (Map p186), near the roundabout just north of the airport

Chinese cuisine. There are lots of veggie options, and at night, amid Bon Ton's starry jungle grounds, the setting is superb. Reservations recommended during peak season (December/January).

**Orkid Ria** CHINESE **$$$**
(Map p190; dishes from RM12; ⏲11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm) The place to go on Pantai Cenang for Chinese-style seafood. Fat shrimp, fish and crabs are plucked straight from tanks out front, and there's the added benefit of air-con. It don't come cheap though.

**English Tea Room** CAFE **$**
(Map p190; mains RM6-15; ⏲8am-5pm) Come to this closet-sized cafe for good-quality sandwiches, sausage rolls, pies, scones and cakes. A great choice if you're growing weary of hotel breakfasts.

**Tomato** MALAYSIAN **$**
(Map p190; mains from RM4; ⏲24hr) This, your typical Malaysian *kandar* (Indian-influenced dishes served over rice) joint, serves excellent rotis and a standard curry-rice Indian/Malay menu at all hours – take note, nighthawks.

**Red Tomato** INTERNATIONAL **$$**
(Map p190; mains RM20-40; ⏲9am-11pm) The Red Tomato is run by expats who crank out some of the best pizza and pasta on the island. Of all the midrange places serving Western standards on the Cenang strip, this is probably your best bet.

**Putumayo** ASIAN, INTERNATIONAL **$$**
(Map p190; mains RM18-48; ⏲1-11pm) Excellent service (the waiter folds your napkin in your lap) amid a beautiful open-air courtyard. The cuisine ranges from across Asia, looping from Malaysia through Thailand to China; we highly recommend the fish cooked Nonya style.

### PANTAI TENGAH & AROUND

**Hungry Monkey** TURKISH **$$**
(Map p190; mains RM29-139; ⏲9.30am-11pm) Hungry Monkey features a cosy dining room, friendly service and a menu that extends far beyond döner kebab. We loved the Adana lamb kebab with eggplant dip, which, like most dishes, was filling and tasty, and came served with a loaf of yeasty, homemade bread.

**Troppo Co.** INTERNATIONAL **$**
(Map p190; mains RM10-28; ⏲9am-5pm Wed-Mon) A tiny cafe serving real coffee and fruit smoothies, supplemented with a menu of hearty breakfast dishes and creative sandwiches.

**La Chocolatine** FRENCH **$$**
(Map p190; mains RM10-15; ⏲9am-9pm) Excellent French desserts – croissants, tarts and éclairs – as well as light salads, sandwiches and quiches. Did we mention coffees, teas and real hot chocolate? A sophisticated, air-conditioned snack stop.

**Osteria** ITALIAN **$$**
(Map p190; mains RM25-56; ⏲noon-11pm) Favoured by local residents, this breezy, quasi open-air dining room serves wood-fired pizzas, homemade pasta and other Italian specialties. Osteria is at its sexy best when it's dark out, so consider a dinner visit.

**Unkaizan** JAPANESE **$$$**
(Map p190; ☎955 4118; www.unkaizan.com; mains RM40-60; ⏲dinner) Lauded Japanese food, served in a cosy bungalow, with seating

either Japanese-style at low tables or on an open patio. The menu spans all that Japan is known for, but don't forget to ask for the specials board, which often includes dishes made with imported Japanese seafood. Reservations recommended.

**Sheela's** INTERNATIONAL $$
(Map p190; mains RM11-45; ⏲dinner Tue-Sun) A menu that's all over the map – Malay faves to lamb chops – served in an inviting garden setting.

**Fat Mum** CHINESE $
(Map p190; mains RM7-16; ⏲dinner Wed-Mon) A cheap and cheerful destination for Chinese that can get pretty boisterous.

**USSR Restaurant** RUSSIAN $$
(Map p190; mains RM20-35; ⏲lunch & dinner) Casual place serving an unexpected menu of borscht, *manti* (steamed dumplings) and other Russian staples.

### PANTAI KOK & AROUND

**Privilege** MALAY, INTERNATIONAL $$
(Map p186; 1st fl, Telaga Harbour Park; mains RM32-178; ⏲noon-11pm Mon-Sat) We liked the intimate, jazzy dining room here and its views over the harbour, but weren't so crazy about the dulled-down 'modern Malaysian' dishes. Still, it's a good choice for those scared by spice or who favour style over flavour.

### ELSEWHERE ON THE ISLAND

**TOP CHOICE Siti Fatimah** MALAY $
(Map p186; Jln Kampung Tok Senik, Kawasan Mata Air; meals from RM5; ⏲8am-5pm Thu-Tue) Quite possibly Langkawi's most famous destination for Malay food – and it lives up to the rep. Food here is served buffet style, and it's up to you to choose from among the tens of rich curries, grilled fish, dips, stir-fries and other Malay-style dishes. The flavours are strong and the prices low. Siti Fatimah is located on Jln Kampung Tok Senik, the road that leads to Kota Mahsuri; most taxi drivers are familiar with the place.

**TOP CHOICE Ashkim** TURKISH $$
(Map p186; ☎012-687 0494; Jln Padang Matsirat, Padang Matsirat; mains RM22-150; ⏲9.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-11pm Sun) Run by an impossibly friendly Turkish-German couple, this is an unpretentious spot for homey Turkish and Mediterranean-style food. Expect kebabs, salads, mezze and fresh bread, much of which is made using imported ingredients. Ashkim is located on Jln Padang Matsirat, next door to the Atma Alam Batik Gallery; call for directions.

## Drinking

As Langkawi is a duty-free island, it's arguably the best spot for booze in Malaysia. While you can get alcohol at many restaurants and hotels for half the price on the mainland, there are some decent beach-style bars here as well, most found along the southern end of Pantai Cenang.

**Little Lylia's Chill Out Bar** BAR
(Map p190; Pantai Cenang; ⏲9am-4am) This longstanding, chummy bar spills out on to Pantai Cenang until the late hours. The chairs and tables may be practically falling apart, but friendly service and a chilled-out vibe hold the place together.

**Cliff** RESTAURANT, BAR
(Map p190; www.theclifflangkawi.com; Pantai Cenang; ⏲11am-11pm) Perched on the rocky outcrop that divides Pantai Cenang and Pantai Tengah, Cliff is located for a sunset cocktail. Expect a full bar, a good wine selection and an eclectic menu that spans from Europe to Malaysia (mains RM38 to RM68).

**Yellow Café** RESTAURANT, BAR
(Map p190; Pantai Cenang; ⏲1pm-1am Tues-Sun) A fun, breezy place with tables right on the beach and a few imported beers. Come between 4pm and 6pm when beers are buy one get one free.

**Babylon** BAR
(Map p190; Pantai Cenang; ⏲4pm-1am) At a glance, this appears to be your typical beach reggae bar, but with a fat menu of cocktails, its own satay stall and two levels of seating, it emerges a bit more sophisticated than most.

**La Sal** RESTAURANT, BAR
(Map p190; www.casadelmar-langkawi.com; Casa del Mar, Pantai Cenang) Open-air restaurant/cocktail bar with some creative drinks and a vaguely Euro vibe. Come evening, tables in the sand and torchlight make La Sal a sexy sunset drink destination.

**Charlie's Place** RESTAURANT, BAR
(Map p186; Jln Pantai Dato Syed Omar, Langkawi Yacht Club, Kuah; ⏲9am-midnight) About 500m uphill from the jetty is this glass cube looking over the harbour. Yes, it's located at the Langkawi Yacht Club, but it's a friendly, unpretentious place that functions equally

well as a restaurant (mains RM22 to RM60) or bar.

**Sunba Retro Bar** BAR
(Map p190; www.sungroup-langkawi.com; Pantai Tengah; ⏲7pm-late) A cover band, DJ, and yes, duty-free alcohol, form the fuel that propel parties late into the night here.

## Shopping

If you haven't already noticed, Langkawi is a duty-free zone, and is a relatively cheap place to buy imported luxury goods, especially alcohol. The greatest conglomeration of duty-free shops is at the jetty in Kuah and at the southern end of Pantai Cenang, near Underwater World.

**Atma Alam Batik Art Vilage** HANDICRAFTS
(Map p186; www.atmaalam.com; Padang Matsirat; ⏲9am-6pm) A huge handicraft complex – set to a funky karaoke-like soundtrack – with an emphasis on batik. Visitors can paint and take home their own swatch of batik for RM30. Atma Alam is located in Padang Matsirat, not far from the airport; most taxi drivers are familiar with it.

**Kompleks Kraf Langkawi** HANDICRAFTS
(Map p186; www.malaysiacraft.com.my; Langkawi Craft Complex; Pantai Pasir Hitam; ⏲10am-6pm) An enormous handicrafts centre where you can watch demonstrations of traditional crafts and buy any traditional Malaysian product or craft you can imagine. There are also a couple of on-site exhibitions devoted to local legends and wedding ceremonies. The complex is located in the far north of the island, virtually across from Pantai Pasir Hitam.

## Information

### Internet Access

The vast majority of hotels and many restaurants offer wi-fi, but internet cafes are few and far between.

**Happy Sky Net Cafe** (Pantai Cenang; per hr RM5; ⏲9am-11pm)

### Medical Services

**Langkawi Hospital** (☎966 3333; Jln Bukit Tengah, Kuah)

### Money

The only banks are at **Kuah** and **Telaga Harbour Park**, although there are also ATMs at the airport, the jetty and at **Underwater World**. There are a couple of **moneychangers** at Pantai Cenang, but elsewhere most travellers have to rely on the resort hotels, which a) give bad rates and b) might not change money if you are not a guest.

### Tourist Information

**Tourism Malaysia** (☎966 7789; Jln Persiaran Putra, Kuah; ⏲9am-5pm) Located at the jetty in Kuah, this office offers comprehensive information on the whole island. At research time, an additional office was being opened at Langkawi's airport.

### Websites

**www.langkawigeopark.com.my** Information on the island's natural areas.

**www.langkawi-online.com** A comprehensive source of island information.

**www.mylangkawi.com** Another source of island info.

## Getting There & Away

### Air

**Langkawi International Airport** (☎955 1311) is located in the west of the island at Padang Matsirat. It's well stocked with ATMs, exchange booths, car-rental agencies, travel agencies, and by the time you read this, a Tourism Malaysia office.

The following airlines operate from Langkawi:

**AirAsia** (☎nationwide 600-85 8888; www.airasia.com) Langkawi International Airport (☎nationwide 600-85 8888; ground floor, Langkawi International Airport; ⏲7.30am-9pm) Daily flights to Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore.

**Firefly** (☎nationwide 03-7845 4543; www.firefly.com.my) Langkawi International Airport (ground floor, Langkawi International Airport; ⏲9am-5pm) Daily flights to Kuala Lumpur (Subang Airport) and Penang.

**Malaysia Airlines** (☎nationwide 1300-88 3000; www.malaysiaairlines.com) Langkawi International Airport (☎955 6322, nationwide 1300-88 3000; www.malaysiaairlines.com; ground floor, Langkawi International Airport; ⏲8.30am-4.30pm & 5.30-7.30pm) Five daily flights to Kuala Lumpur.

### TRAVEL AGENCIES

Both **FE Holidays** (☎955 3716; fe.holidays@gmail.com; Pantai Cenang; ⏲10am-10pm) and **Travel Shop** (☎955 8829; Pantai Cenang; ⏲10am-10pm) sell the usual gamut of tickets and car rentals, and can also sell seats and provide information on local snorkelling and boat tours.

**Silk Air** (☎955 9771; www.silkair.com; 1st floor, Langkawi International Airport; ⏲2-10pm Sun, 9am-5pm Mon, 2-10pm Tue, 9am-5pm Wed-Thu & 2-10pm Sat) Daily flights to Singapore.

### Boat

All passenger ferries operate from Kuah's busy ferry terminal. Several ferry providers, including **Langkawi Ferry Service** (LFS; ☎966 9439; www.langkawi-ferry.com), have merged and operate a shared ferry service to George Town, Penang. Other destinations include:

| DESTINATION | DURATION (HR) | FARE (RM, ADULT/ CHILD) | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kuala Perlis | 1 | 18/13 | Every 1½hr, 7.30am-6.30pm |
| Kuala Kedah | 1½ | 23/17 | Hourly, 7.30am-6.30pm |
| Satun (Thailand) | 1½ | 30/23 | 9am, 1pm & 5.15pm |
| Ko Lipe (Thailand) | 1½ | 118 | 9.15am (October-May only) |
| George Town | 2½-3 | 60/45 | 2.30pm & 5.15pm |

## Getting Around

### To/From the Airport/Jetty

Fixed taxi fares from the airport include Kuah jetty, Pantai Cenang or Pantai Kok (RM24), Tanjung Rhu (RM30) and Teluk Datai (RM60). Fares to these destinations from the jetty in Kuah are nearly equivalent. Buy a coupon at the desk before leaving the airport terminal and use it to pay the driver.

### FERRY WARNING

During the monsoon season, from July to mid-September, you may want to shelve any notions of taking the ferry to Langkawi. During this time of year the seas are typically very rough and the ferry ride (in reality a large speedboat) can be a terrifying and quite literally vomit-inducing experience. Our trip from Penang, in mid-July, was both of these; we flew back. Consider yourself warned.

### Car

Cars can be rented cheaply, and touts from the travel agencies at the Kuah jetty will assail you upon arrival. Rates start at around RM60 per day, but drops with bargaining. Elsewhere, a convenient place to rent cars or motorcycles is **T-Shoppe**, with branches at **Kuah**, **Pantai Cenang** and **Pantai Tengah**.

### Motorcycle & Bicycle

The easiest way to get around is to hire a motorbike for around RM35 per day. You can do a leisurely circuit of the island (70km) in a day. The roads are excellent, and outside Kuah it's very pleasant and easy riding. Motorbikes can be hired at stands all over the island starting at about RM20 for 24 hours. A few places also rent mountain bikes for RM15 per day.

### Taxi

As there is no public transport available, taxis are the main way of getting around, but fares are relatively high and it may be worth your time to rent your own vehicle. There are taxi stalls at the airport, jetty and at **Pantai Cenang**, across from Mertius Pelangi Beach.

# Alor Setar

POP 405,523

Most travellers use the capital of Kedah, also known as Alor Star, as a hopping-off point to Langkawi or southern Malaysia, but there's enough around to keep you exploring for a day. This is a very Malay city, culturally rooted in a conservative mindset that references a fairly strict interpretation of Islam and reverence for the local monarchy.

## Sights

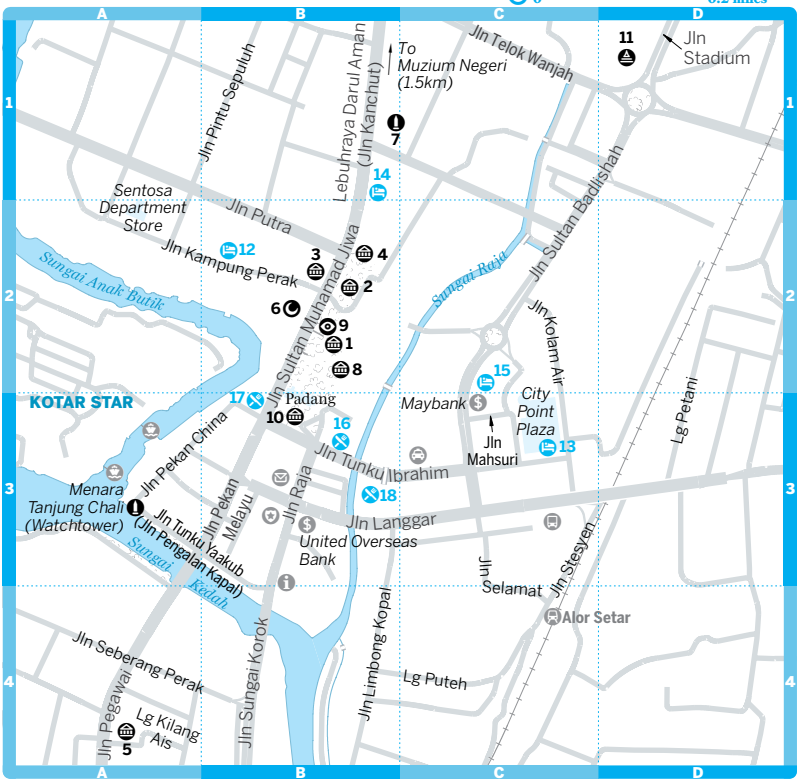
**FREE Muzium Negeri** MUSEUM

(Lebuhraya Darul Aman; ⏲10am-5pm Sat-Thu) The State Museum is 2km north of the *padang* (grassy area that also functions as the town square). The small collection includes early Chinese porcelain, artefacts from archaeological excavations at Lembah Bujang and dioramas of royal and rural Malaysian life. A taxi from the town centre costs RM10.

**FREE Mahathir's Birthplace** MUSEUM

(Map p201; 18 Lg Kilang Ais; ⏲10am-5pm Sat-Thu, 10am-noon & 3-5pm Fri) Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, fourth prime minister of Malaysia and longtime keystone of national politics, was born the youngest of nine children in Alor Setar in 1925. His childhood home, Rumah Kelahiran Mahathir is now preserved

## Alor Setar




## Alor Setar

### Sights

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Balai Besar | B2 |
| 2 | Balai Nobat | B2 |
| 3 | Clock Tower | B2 |
| 4 | Galeri Sultan Abdul Halim | B2 |
| 5 | Mahathir's Birthplace | A4 |
| 6 | Masjid Zahir | B2 |
| 7 | Menara Alor Star | B1 |
| 8 | Muzium Diraja | B2 |
| 9 | Padang | B2 |
| 10 | State Art Gallery | B3 |
| 11 | Wat Siam Nikrodharam | D1 |

### Sleeping

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | Comfort Motel | B2 |
| 13 | Holiday Villa | C3 |
| 14 | Hotel Samila | B1 |
| 15 | New Regent | C2 |

### Eating

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | Kim Bee Chew | B3 |
| 17 | Muda Coffee Shop | B3 |
| 18 | Pekan Rabu | B3 |

as a small museum, containing family effects, photos and the politician's old bicycle.

### Menara Alor Star TOWER

(Telekom Tower; Map p201; www.menaraalorstar.com.my; Lebuhraya Darul Aman; admission adult/child RM10/5; ⏲9am-10pm) If the Petronas Towers weren't enough for you in KL, the second-tallest tower in the country is the Menara Alor Star, which at 165.5m high is by far the tallest structure in town. A glass-sided lift will take you to the observation deck for good views of Alor Setar and the surrounding countryside.

**Wat Siam Nikrodharam** BUDDHIST TEMPLE
(Map p201; Jln Stadium; ⏲7am-4pm) Although Alor Setar has weathered Thai occupation, its main Buddhist community is Chinese in heritage. Thus the presence of this cross-cultural wat (Buddhist temple): typically Thai with its stupas and fire-in-the-lotus imagery, yet scattershot with Chinese Buddhist saints, of import to the Chinese donors who funded the construction of this complex.

**TOWN SQUARE**

Some impressive buildings front the **padang** (Map p201), or town square.

**Masjid Zahir** MOSQUE
(Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa; ⏲7am-7pm) This, the Kedah state mosque, is one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in Malaysia. Built in 1912, it has a classical beauty, more of an apparition from *The Thousand and One Nights* than a smoothed-out modern Malaysian mosque. The building encloses the cemetery of Kedah warriors who fought the Thais in 1821. Behind the structure, in contrast to the secular High Court, is the religious *syariah* (sharia) court complex. Only Muslims are allowed inside.

**Balai Besar** HISTORIC BUILDING
(Royal Audience Hall; Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa) This open-sided structure was built in 1898 and is still used by the sultan of Kedah for royal and state ceremonies, though it is not open to the public. Supported on tall pillars topped with Victorian iron lacework, the building also shows Thai influences in its decoration.

**FREE Muzium Diraja** MUSEUM
(Royal Museum; Map p201; Jln Raja; ⏲9am-5pm Sat-Thu, 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm Fri) Now a museum, these connected structures formerly served as the royal palace for the sultan and other members of the family from 1856. Besides housing paraphernalia of the royal family, it's quite enjoyable to wander round the courtyard and admire the buildings.

**FREE State Art Gallery** ART GALLERY
(Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa; ⏲9am-5pm) The elegant structure of this gallery, built in 1893 as a courthouse, is enough of a reason to visit, less so the rather uninspiring gallery of contemporary Malaysian art it holds.

**Balai Nobat** HISTORIC BUILDING
(Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa) Built in 1906, this is a striking octagonal tower topped by an onion-shaped dome. It's the repository of the *nobat* (royal orchestra), principally composed of percussion instruments; the drums in this orchestra are said to have been a gift from the sultan of Melaka in the 15th century. It isn't open to the public, and the instruments are brought out only on ceremonial occasions such as royal weddings.

**Galeri Sultan Abdul Halim** MUSEUM
(Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa; admission adult/child RM5/2; 10am-5pm Sat-Thu) The former High Court, erected in 1922, is today a museum dedicated to Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, the current Sultan of Kedah and at the time of writing, Malaysia's acting Head of State. Inside you'll find photos and memorabilia from the sultan's life.

**Clock Tower** HISTORIC BUILDING
(Map p201; Jln Sultan Muhaman Jiwa) This clock tower was erected in the early 1900s so that the muezzin at the neighbouring mosque would know when to call the faithful to prayer.

## Sleeping

**Holiday Villa** HOTEL $$
(Map p201; ☎734 9999; www.holidayvilla.com.my; 162 Jln Tunku Ibrahim; incl breakfast r/ste RM300-440/630-2800; ❄@📶🏊) This towering hotel adjoining the City Point Plaza shopping mall is easily the best place in town. It has spacious, tastefully furnished rooms with all the amenities, and a range of facilities, including a gym, pool and spa.

**New Regent** HOTEL $$
(Map p201; ☎731 5000; info.newregent@yahoo.com; 1536 Jln Sultanah Badlishah; incl breakfast r/ste RM140-200/280; ❄📶) A 2012 makeover has the exterior and lobby of this longstanding hotel looking downright sexy. The rooms, however, although clean, functional and relatively attractive, still carry traces of the slightly more utilitarian hotel that it used to be.

**Hotel Samila** HOTEL $
(Map p201; ☎731 8888; 27 Jln Kanchut; r/ste RM88-128/198-278; ❄📶) The exterior and logo of this hotel remind us of something from 'The Jetsons'. Inside, the rooms are huge and feature the kind of furniture you'd expect in a Jetsons-style hotel, although we did find

some of the amenities (stained sheets, ragged towels) disappointingly unfuturistic.

### Comfort Motel
HOTEL $

(Map p201; ☎734 4866; 2C Jln Kampung Perak; r RM28-50; ❄) This is a good-value, Chinese-style budget hotel, located in a renovated wooden house across from a mosque. The rooms are tidy and come equipped with TV and air-con, but are otherwise bare and share bathrooms.

## Eating

### TOP CHOICE Muda Coffee Shop
CHINESE $

(Map p201; 111 Jln Pekan China; mains RM3-20; ⏲8pm-1am Sat-Thu) We should start by making it clear that this place is for adventurous eaters only: the grumpy/indifferent staff don't speak much English, and the highlight is a dish of steamed fish head. But oh what a fish head. Accompanied with *or mee* (noodles fried with dark soy sauce) and a beer, it was frankly one of the tastiest meals we had in Malaysia.

### Kim Bee Chew
MALAY $

(Map p201; Jln Tunku Ibrahim; mains from RM5; ⏲breakfast & lunch) Chinese coffee shop that's also home to a popular *nasi kandar* vendor; expect fragrant yellow rice topped with a variety of rich curries.

### Pekan Rabu
MALAY $

(Wednesday Market; Map p201; Jln Langgar; ⏲breakfast & lunch) The ground floor of this tidy market has a food court featuring Malay dishes.

## Information

**Tourist Information Office** (Jln Raja; ⏲9am-5pm Sun-Wed, to 3.30pm Thu) South of the town centre.

## Getting There & Away

### Air

**Sultan Abdul Halim Airport** is 11km north of town just off the Lebuhraya. **AirAsia** (☎nationwide 600 85 8888; www.airasia.com; Sultan Abdul Halim Airport; ⏲9am-9pm), **Firefly** (☎nationwide 03-7845 4543; www.firefly.com.my; Sultan Abdul Halim Airport)and **Malaysia Airlines** (☎nationwide 1300-88 3000; www.malaysiaairlines.com; Sultan Abdul Halim Airport) all offer daily flights to Kuala Lumpur (one hour, from RM446).

### Bus

The tiny **local bus station** (Jln Langgar) handles frequent departures to Kuala Kedah (one hour, RM3), from 7am to 10pm.

The main bus terminal, **Shahab Perdana**, is 4km north of the town centre. A taxi there costs RM10. Destinations include the following:

| DESTINATION | DURATION (HR) | FARE (RM) | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kangar | 1 | 5.30 | Hourly, 6.45am-8.30pm |
| Kuala Kedah | 1 | 11 | Hourly, 7am-10pm |
| Butterworth | 1½ | 9.90 | Every 30min, 6.30am-7.30pm |
| Ipoh | 4 | 24 | 10.30am & 4.30pm |
| Kota Bharu | 6 | 35 | 9am & 9.30pm |
| Kuala Lumpur | 7 | 40 | Every 30min, 8am-midnight |
| Melaka | 8 | 51 | 10.45am & 10pm |
| Singapore | 12 | 70 | 9pm & 10pm |

### GETTING TO THAILAND: BUKIT KAYU HITAMO TO HAT YAI

**Getting to the border** The border at Bukit Kayu Hitamo, 48km north of Alor Setar, is the main crossing between Malaysia and Thailand. The Lebuhraya handles the vast majority of road traffic between the two countries, and as there are no taxis or local buses at this border, the only practical way to cross here is on a through bus from points elsewhere in Malaysia.

**At the border** The Malaysian border post is open every day from 6am to midnight. All passengers must disembark to clear customs and immigration (both Thai and Malaysian) before reboarding.

**Moving on** Again, lack of local transport means that you'll most likely pass this border on a bus already bound for Hat Yai.

### Train

The **train station** (Jln Stesyen) is southeast of the town centre. There is one daily northbound train to Hat Yai in Thailand (RM9 to RM16, three hours), and one southbound to KL (RM22 to RM101, 9½ hours); check with www.ktmb.com.my for the latest info on fares and schedules.

### Getting Around

There is an informal **taxi stand** on Jln Tunku Ibrahim. A taxi to/from the airport costs RM20. The town centre is accessible on foot.

## Around Alor Setar

**MUZIUM PADI**

The **Paddy Museum** (off Hwy K351; admission adult/child/camera RM3/1/2; ⏲9am-5pm Sat-Thu, 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm Sat) is all about Kedah's main crop: rice. It's located about 10km northwest of Alor Setar, amid, appropriately enough, green rice paddies. The complex, which has a distinctly socialist feel, and which resembles stacked brass flying saucers, is supposed to emulate the gunny sacks used by rice farmers. Inside…well, if you're *really* into rice, you'll love it. The main event is a top-floor rotating observation deck that looks out onto a mural of the surrounding rice fields (rather than the rather idyllic fields themselves); the gimmick pays homage to Gunung Keriang, a nearby limestone hill that, according to local folklore, is also supposed to rotate.

A taxi here from Alor Setar will cost around RM25.

**KUALA KEDAH**

The main attraction at this busy fishing village 11km from Alor Setar is **Kota Kuala Kedah** (⏲9am-7pm), a fort built around 1770 opposite the town on the far bank of Sungai Kedah. In one of history's little twists, this Portuguese-built castle became a bastion of Malay independence against warring Siamese, finally falling to invaders in 1821. Try to find 'Meriam Badak Berendam' (the Wallowing Rhino), a cannon stuck in the debris of the collapsed sea wall, believed to be the abode of the fortress's guardian spirit.

Kuala Kedah also functions as a gateway to Pulau Langkawi. Ferries leave approximately every hour from 7am to 7pm (adult/child RM23/17).

A taxi to Kuala Kedah from Alor Setar will cost RM20; hourly buses also make the run from Alor Setar (one hour, RM3) between 7am and 10pm.

# PERLIS

Perlis is Malaysia's smallest state and doesn't tend to register on most travellers' radar except as a transit point to Thailand or Langkawi (via Kuala Perlis). Even Malays tend to regard it as essentially a rice-producing pocket along the Thai border. This isn't an area that's particularly heavy on sites of interest to tourists, but at the risk of stereotyping, as in many rural backwaters the population here is quite friendly. It can be a kick just to hang out with the locals and improve your Bahasa Malaysia (because English definitely isn't widely spoken). Otherwise, small but beautiful Taman Negara Perlis state park is worth exploring.

### History

Perlis was originally part of Kedah, though it variously fell under Thai and Acehnese sovereignty. After the Siamese conquered Kedah in 1821, the sultan of Kedah made unsuccessful attempts to regain his territory until, in 1842, he agreed to Siamese terms. The Siamese reinstalled the sultan, but made Perlis into a separate vassal principality with its own raja.

As with Kedah, power was transferred from the Thais to the British under the 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty, and a British Resident was installed at Arau. A formal treaty between Britain and Perlis wasn't signed until 1930. During the Japanese occupation in WWII, Perlis was 'returned' to Thailand, and then after the war it again returned to British rule until it became part of the Malayan Union, and then the Federation of Malaya in 1957.

## Kangar

POP 48,898

Kangar, 45km northwest of Alor Setar, is the state capital of Perlis. As with the state it's the capital of, there's not a heck of a lot to do here besides relax, pray or chat, all of which are fine options for those awaiting an onwards bus.

### Sights

**FREE Muzium Kota Kayang** MUSEUM

(⏲10am-5pm) Around 7km southwest of Kangar, the small but impressive Muzium Kota Kayang houses displays on local history, including Neolithic tools, royal regalia and ceramics. There are some real treasures here, and facilities are surprisingly modern, with clear English descriptions. The museum is attractively located on a plot of land

backed by limestone cliffs and shallow caves, as well as the modest mausoleums of two 16th-century sultans of Kedah. You'll need to catch a taxi from Kangar to get here (RM15).

**FREE Muzium Negeri Perlis** MUSEUM
(National Museum; Jln Kolam, Kompleks Warisan Negeri; ⏲9am-4pm Sun-Thu, noon Sat) Kangar town's sole attraction is the Muzium Negeri Perlis, with dry exhibitions on the history of the state and the royal family.

## Sleeping & Eating

There are many cheap restaurants and cafes sprinkled around the bus station.

**Hotel Ban Cheong** HOTEL $
(☎976 1184; 79 Jln Kangar; r RM60-160; ❄📶) This long-standing Chinese hotel in the town centre has basic singles with fan and shared bathrooms and air-con doubles with private facilities. It's a reasonable budget option for an overnight stay.

**Hotel Sri Garden** HOTEL $$
(☎977 3188; www.hotelsrigarden.webs.com; 96 Persiaran Jubli Emas; r incl breakfast RM106-170; ❄📶) Standard Malaysian midranger with clean and airy rooms.

## Getting There & Away

### Bus

The **long-distance bus station** is on the southern edge of town, off Jln Jubli Perak. Departures include:

| DESTINATION | DURATION (HR) | FARE (RM) | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alor Setar | 1 | 5.30 | Every 30min, 6.40am-7.30pm |
| Butterworth/ George Town | 3 | 11.90-15.70 | Every 30min, 8am-4pm |
| Ipoh | 6 | 27.20 | 9am, 2.30pm & 8pm |
| Kota Bharu | 8 | 38.70 | 9am & 9pm |
| Kuala Lumpur | 9 | 45.70 | Every 30min, 8.30pm-11pm |
| Melaka | 10 | 48.50-55.20 | Frequent, 9am-10pm |
| Singapore | 12 | 75 | 6.30pm & 8pm |

Infrequent buses to Padang Besar (RM4.20) leave from the chaotic **local bus station** on Jln Tun Abdul Razak. There's also a taxi stall here, and drivers can take you to Padang Besar (RM30) and Alor Setar (RM50).

Kuala Perlis, about 10km southwest of Kangar, is yet another jumping off point for Pulau Langkawi. From Kangar, the pier can be reached by bus (RM2) or taxi (RM14), and ferries to Langkawi leave approximately every hour from 7am to 7pm (adult/child RM23/17). From Kuala Perlis, there are frequent buses to a number of destinations across Malaysia.

# Taman Negara Perlis

The small state park of Taman Negara Perlis in the northwest of the state runs for 36km along the Thai border, covering about 5000 hectares. It comprises the Nakawan Range – the longest continuous range of limestone hills in Malaysia – and the Mata Ayer and Wang Mu Forest Reserves.

The nearest town is Kaki Bukit, from which a winding mountain road leads to the tiny border village of Wang Kelian, 3km from the park visitor centre.

## Sights & Activities

Taman Negara Perlis has heavily forested slopes and numerous cave systems, such as **Gua Wang Burma**, which has intriguing limestone formations. The park is the country's only semideciduous forest and is rich in wildlife; this is the only habitat in Malaysia for the stump-tailed macaque. White-handed gibbons and a rich array of birds can also be found here.

Just outside Kaki Bukit, **Gua Kelam** (Cave of Darkness; ⏲8am-5.30pm Sun-Fri to 6pm Sat) is a 370m-long cavern gouged out in tin-mining days, although it was closed when we stopped by. When open, a river runs through the cave and emerges in a cascade at a popular swimming spot and a landscaped park. The old tin mine is a short walk from the far end of the cavern. The cave is a long 1km walk from Kaki Bukit; a guide is obligatory and costs RM40 for up to 10 people.

The **Wang Kelian Sunday Market** straddles the Malaysia–Thailand border. Fruit, vegetables and clothes from both countries are for sale, and provided you stay in the market area no passport is needed. The Malaysian side of the market is open every day.

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## GETTING TO THAILAND: PADANG BESAR TO HAT YAI

**Getting to the border** There are regular buses from Kangar (RM4.20), stopping at an unmarked bus stop near BSN bank, about 500m from the border. The taxi stand is on the left before you reach the bus stop, and fares are posted for destinations, including Kangar (RM36) and Alor Setar (RM80).

**At the border** The Malaysian border post is open every day from 6am to 10pm. All passengers must disembark to clear customs and immigration (both Thai and Malaysian) before reboarding. Very few people, if any, walk the more than 2km of no-man's land between the Thai and Malaysian sides of the border. Motorcyclists shuttle pedestrian travellers back and forth for about RM2 each way.

**Moving on** There is one daily train connection between Padang Besar and Hat Yai (RM6 to RM13, 50 minutes).

## Sleeping & Eating

The modern wooden chalets in the **park visitor centre** (dm/chalets RM10/50-1100; ❄) are very comfortable. There's no restaurant, but staff can prepare food.

## Information

The **park visitor centre** (☎945 7898; admission RM2; ⏲9am-noon & 2-5pm)is at Wang Kelian, 2km from the Thai border; guides (RM40 for four hours) can also be hired at the centre, and are obligatory for many areas.

## Getting There & Away

There is no public transport to the park. Buses to Kaki Bukit run from Kangar's local bus station every two hours from 8.45am to 6.45pm (RM4.20). A taxi to the park from Kangar will cost at least RM50.



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